

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of monitoring nodes in a network including a plurality of nodes,  
5 comprising:  
    processing at least one node identified by an identifier in a set of a circular list of sets,  
    each set of the circular list of sets including zero or more identifiers of nodes; and  
    advancing to the next set of the circular list of sets.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein processing the at least one node includes  
    sending a polling message to the at least one node.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the processing the at least one node includes  
    moving the identifier to a subsequent set of the circular list of sets.
- 15 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the subsequent set is the set that will be  
    processed at the next timing interval of the node identified by the identifier.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising adding a copy of the identifier to a  
20 subsequent set of the circular list of sets.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the subsequent set is the set that will be  
    processed when a response from the node identified by the identifier is expected.
- 25 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising processing polling responses.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the processing and advancing are performed at  
    periodic intervals.

9. A system, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing a network management system for execution by the processor for

5 monitoring nodes in a network including a plurality of nodes, the network management system comprising:

computer code that processes at least one node identified by an identifier in  
asset of a circular list of sets, each set of the circular list of sets including zero or more  
identifiers of nodes; and

10 computer code that advances to the next set of the circular list of sets.

10. A system for monitoring nodes in a network including a plurality of nodes,  
comprising:

means for processing at least one node identified by an identifier in a set of a circular  
15 list of sets, each set of the circular list of sets including zero or more identifiers of nodes; and  
means for advancing to the next set of the circular list of sets.

11. A method of monitoring nodes in a network including a plurality of nodes,  
comprising:

20 receiving a signal from a timer at periodic intervals;

processing polling responses;

processing at least one node identified by an identifier in a set of a circular list of sets  
by sending a polling message to the at least one node, each set of the circular list of sets  
including zero or more identifiers of nodes; and

25 advancing to the next set of the circular list of sets.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the processing the at least one node includes  
moving the identifier to a subsequent set of the circular list of sets.

30 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the subsequent set is the set that will be  
processed at the next timing interval of the node identified by the identifier.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising adding a copy of the identifier to a subsequent set of the circular list of sets.

5 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the subsequent set is the set that will be processed when a response from the node identified by the identifier is expected.

16. A system, comprising:  
a processor; and  
10 a memory storing a network management system for execution by the processor for monitoring nodes in a network including a plurality of nodes, the network management system comprising:  
computer code for a timer that generates a signal at periodic intervals;  
computer code for a poller that processes polling responses; processes at least  
15 one node identified by an identifier in a set of a circular list of sets by sending a polling message to the at least one node, each set of the circular list of sets including zero or more identifiers of nodes; and advances to the next set of the circular list of sets.

20 17. A system for monitoring nodes in a network including a plurality of nodes, comprising:  
means for receiving a signal from a timer at periodic intervals;  
means for processing polling responses;  
means for processing at least one node identified by an identifier in a set of a circular  
25 list of sets by sending a polling message to the at least one node, each set of the circular list of sets including zero or more identifiers of nodes; and  
means for advancing to the next set of the circular list of sets.